



## From the President's Desk

SIA:



### Shared Concerns

Following my last article on Architectural Education, I was intending to touch on another area of concern, but an interesting article by Al Stratford, President of South African Institute of Architects (SAIA) brought me back to the topic. Sharing an experience of another African nation may be a constructive intervention at this stage of shaping the attitudes of SIA16.

In their periodical "Architecture South Africa" March/April 2009, Mr. Stratford wrote:

*"I recently attended a seminar that addressed the fields of human activity. Twelve broad activities were identified- the following five come to mind: art and culture, science and technology, and business...."*

*(my mind started wondering) ,how architecture seemed to transcend these five out of the 12 fields we collectively get involved in. ...In my opinion, architecture and the practice thereof is a seamless Endeavour that encompasses art and culture, science and technology, and the 'glue' of good business practice which should make our work sustainable. I have great difficulty with an approach to architecture which in some way separates these five activities and postulates that the practice of good architecture may be exercised without all of these dynamics being present in the work."*

Mr. Stratford continued reinforcing his argument by resorting to the history of the profession; he quoted Corbusier (1887-1965) who wrote: 'When art enters our building construction, then we have Architecture'

Then he went back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC to quote Vitruvius in his idea of what architecture should offer: 'firmness, commodity and delight'.

According to Stratford's believe both the above quotes;

*"...encourage a holistic view of architecture which thrives on art, culture ,science, technology and obviously, good business practice. This is not to say that a particular individual architect has to be proficient in all of these areas to practice efficiently, but that the architect should have he ability to hold these together, much as a maestro of the orchestra conducts the different instruments to create a harmonious piece of music... My view is that no matter how good one is on the violin (design) the final product may not be good architecture unless one has an architect conductor holding the piece together. Unfortunately the conductor may often not be an architect, resulting in work of less architectural merit. "*

My Quotation from the president of SAIA ends here, but for me it seems to have said it all.

Omer Siddig Osman,  
SIA, President

**"In my opinion, architecture and the practice thereof is a seamless Endeavour that encompasses art and culture, science and technology, and the 'glue' of good business practice which should make our work sustainable."**

*Al Stratford, President of South African Institute of Architects (SAIA)*

## Architecture of the Month

### The Art Institute of Chicago–The Modern Wing

Another fascinating Renzo Piano museum emerged early this summer. The modern wing of the Art Institute of Chicago opened in May, after 10 years of its initial commission with a \$300 million budget. The extension houses a variety of functions in a seemingly effortless simplicity. It sits across street from O'Gery's Pritzker Pavilion of the famous Millennium Park, stretching the famous Piano's light-filtering canopies. The modern wing follows a series of museums designed by Renzo Piano including the Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and the most anticipated Harvard Art Museum.



### Dubai Hosts World Interior Design Congress

The International Federation of Interior Architects/ Designers (IFI) will hold its 24th General Assembly and the World Interior Design Congress 2009 for the first time in the Middle-East under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, wife of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai from 6-11 November 2009. Founded in Denmark in 1963, IFI is the premiere association for interior designers from around the world Under the theme, 'Celebrate Interior Design,' the Congress will host a number of re-nowned speakers, including 'Captain Organic' Ross Lovegrove, iconic Italian designer Piero Lissoni and Sebastian Conran.

### SIA Council Meeting December 2009

The council of the Sudanese Institute of Architects have gathered twice; in August and December to review the progress of the council's plans; which were approved, and the performance of the executive office. The council has also reviewed the proposed constitution of SIA, which is planned to be discussed by the general assembly early next year.

The council had also discussed some of the difficulties facing the progress of the plans proposed by the executive office report.



The Engineers' Club  
Al-Amarat st. no.7  
Khartoum, Sudan

Phone: (+249) 183 489377  
Fax: (+249) 183 488756  
E-mail: info@sia-sud.org

### Welcome to the club ...

The department of Architecture of the University Technological Sciences had celebrated the graduation of 49 of its students on September, 2009.



\* SIA Executive Office mourns the death of our colleagues, **Omer Abu-Shanab** who passed away on the 18th of August. Abu-shanab was a sincere architect who had been a close friend and supporter of SIA's activities.

\* SIA Executive Office also mourns the death of one of the pillars of Sudanese Engineering Unions, our colleague: **Bakheet Mekki Hamad** who passed away on the 21st of September. Mr. Hamad had been President of the Sudanese Engineering Society (1996-2002).



## THEORIES ON VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE AND PROBLEMS OF PRESERVATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

As part of its activities (S.I.A) the Committee of Social and Cultural Affairs held a lecture on Thursday the 15th of October in the conference hall of the Banks Union on (**Theories on Vernacular Architecture and Problems of Preservation in a Changing World**). The lecture was presented by Prof. Dick Urban Vestebro , Div. of Urban Studies , Dept. of Infrastructure , Royal Institute of Technology , Stockholm, Sweden.

Prof. Dick started his lecture by highlighting the meaning of Vernacular from language and architectural point of views. He also, pointed that Vernacular Architecture seeks for ideal solutions rather than unique ones (as it adapts to local climate and social conditions). He also, pointed that there are some biased writings, especially those during Post Colonial period, which has been copied blindly by some others. Moreover, Prof. Dick mentioned some famous writers who wrote on the theme , like Paul Oliver and Amos Rapoport, plus the effect of change of life style of the indigenous people during the colonial period has affected the local architectural style and planning.

Prof. Dick raised some questions like ; what is a vernacular? What is a modern life? And what is a modern building? He also raised the problem of waste , the hazards of fire , security, connection of services, and negligence of many architects and politicians to the value of indigenous architecture. The questions and comments were raised mainly on the relation between vernacular architecture and HABITAT survey on human settlements, the notion of preference and movement of many people from what is traditional to what is modern, the problem of security, maintenance, experience, globalization and waste of energy caused by modern architecture.

## The Changing Face of Khartoum

On the evening of December 2nd, 2009, the Sweden House at the International Park in Khartoum, hosted Professor Mark Duffield, of the Department of Politics—University of Bristol, who shared outsider views regarding the changes in the built environment. Professor Duffield had singled out the so-called gated-communities (developments that visibly use fences and gates to separate off and demarcate areas of private space), such as the planned Dreamland project in northern Gezira, Araak City, Yasmine Residence and Sariat. The emergence of such communities is seen by Professor Duffield as a manifestation of both the lack of proper housing policy by the government and the changes in the patterns of urbanization.

The audience had an interesting comments and questions session following the presentation.



## SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

### Zero-Carbon is the New Limit !! ...

Green roofs, it is a long time now since sustainable buildings have moved from isolated initiatives to being a global movement to which all architects and planners are committed, and contributing. Not like the case in Sudan, this movement has consolidated in tough buildings regulations, and a growing eco-conscious clientele.



After chasing the net-zero energy buildings, the shift is now underway for zero-carbon societies. Low-Carbon is a concept that refers to a minimum output of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly CO<sub>2</sub> into the biosphere. Also, despite the current prices slump that solar industry (almost the cornerstone of Zero Energy approaches) is suffering, some European countries are raising the bar for carbon emissions, by adopting several ecological, architectural, and engineering techniques. For example, the UK now mandates all new homes to be zero-carbon by 2016.

## ARCH NEWS .. ARCH NEWS ..

### AIA Healthcare Awards 2009

On July 28th, the American Institute of Architects—AIA, announced the recipients of Healthcare buildings Awards 2009. The jury of eight members has made its decision that emphasizes the uniqueness of healthcare facilities as a building type that should satisfy a variety of needs simultaneously. The psychological, aesthetic and environmental considerations are becoming of vital roles in the struggle to fight illness and injury.

The winners included: 1. Providence New Clinic in Portland, 2. the Kohler Pavilion of the Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) by (Perkins + Will) in a joint venture with (Peterson Kolberg & Associates.)

The Cancer Center of Wilmington won the award of the Un-built Project, designed by HKS. Inc in a joint venture with UHS Building Solutions.



## WEB REVIEW

### GREAT BUILDINGS COLLECTION

This website represents one of the earliest online reference sites. Having started in 1997, the collection website documents thousands of the original architectural works, as well as hundreds of pioneer architects. It features a helpful search tool that one can use to browse the intensive and huge database, which is categorized into: Architectural Books, 3D-Models, and Architectural Types.

Great Buildings Collection (<http://www.greatbuildings.com/>) represent a good source for both professionals and students as it contains, beside the works basic information, images section, drawings, and sometimes 3D-models. A Discussion Forum is also created for each single work and each single architect.

# The Governor-General Palace in Khartoum

One of the first construction jobs that Kitchener initiated after being Governor General of Sudan was the rehabilitation of the Governor-General's Palace. The roots of the prevalent palace architecture as well as that of most of the colonial buildings are explained in the extremely interesting story that follows: "It was Kitchener himself... who appointed the young lieutenant Gorringe as architect of the palace. The fact that Gorringe had not passed any architectural examinations was a small problem. Ever resourceful, Kitchener handed him a selection of past papers, suggesting that when he had a look at them he might care to set one for himself. This met with an immediate and discerning response. Not only did [Gorringe] set the examination, he passed with flying colours".

Thereupon he rose to the rank of captain and sent for architectural books from England. As he himself was to put it, with all modesty, 'With the help of these plans, elevations and other architectural



the Governor-General's Palace (The Republic Palace)-Back Facade

details which they contained, I designed... the new palace'. And having, so to speak, developed a taste for this particular kind of work he went on to design a variety of large public buildings fronting on to the Blue Nile...

Lieutenant-General George Frederick Gorringe (1868-1945), is a royal army engineer, who has placed strong footprints in the Sudanese colonial architec-



Sudan Club, One of Gorringe Early Buildings

ture, He built the Anglo-Egyptian fort in ATBARA during the invasion and later

the Government offices at Wad-Madani, Sinja, the Governor-General's Palace, Gordon Memorial College (GMC) and the Sudan Club.



the Governor-General's Palace (The Republic Palace)-Front Facade

Calling himself 'Eureka', "Gorringe describing his work" wrote a letter to the Building News which was published in August 1902 under the heading 'A New Style'..." (Potter, 1984, 29: 30)

The northern façade of the palace as Kitchener found it is not dissimilar to its condition some twenty years later, where the most obvious change is the added veranda, which faces the river. In addition to its beautification function, the veranda serves to hide the shabby old elevation. Both the building materials and construction techniques used in the new veranda are intelligently integrated in the old



Gordon Memorial College (GMC): Fabricious Pasha and Gorringe

building. The Nubian sandstone, quarried from the hills just west of Omdurman, was the main building material used in building the palace. Besides that, the building has marble decorative fenestration framing. The new frontage has plastered bricks walls.

The verandas and corridors in the old building are roofed by intersecting vaults, but the roof of the new veranda is built as a series of jack arches. Further renovations were limited to redressing and repainting the external walls and redecorating the facades of the original as shown in a photograph taken in March 2006. The building remains as a typical example of buildings in that era – largely in the same state to which Gorringe transformed it.

The architectural character of the building is predominantly eclectic, yet Romanesque ele-

ments are evident, especially in the arches of the verandas of both phases. Behind the northern veranda, the original main entrance of the Gordon palace with its massive finely textured stone and marble piers and lintels are still kept in good condition. Shabby façades were renovated to match the beautifully decorated entrance.

Both the master plan of Khartoum prepared under the strict commands of Kitchener and the Palace transformed by the self-claimed architect Gorringe, wrote the introductory chapter of colonial architecture in the Sudan. Inexperienced as he was, Gorringe, with his 'New Style' approach, seemed to have set the ground for the subsequent introduction of the Modern Movement to the Sudan. The 'New Style' dominated the practice of architecture for many years to come, as is revealed by the exam-



Khartoum Master Plan - 1898 : Kitchener, Talbot and Gorringe

ples that follow.

Concurrently with the rehabilitation task of his palace, Kitchener called for funds to build an educational institute in commemoration of his predecessor, the late General Gordon. In response to the call, which was advertised in the British Press on 30 November 1898, donations were so generous that The sum collected exceeded the 10, 000 pounds, the initial estimated cost of the project.

The job of drawing the plans of the main building in the campus was assigned to Fabricious Pasha, the architect for the Khedive of Egypt . Kitchener himself scrutinized and approved the plans and ordered the construction to commence immediately . Kitchener assigned to Lieutenant Gorringe the job of producing the architectural details and supervising construction. On 5 January 1900, Lord Cromer laid the foundation stone of the college in the name of Queen Victoria who accepted to be the patron of the college. Construction was still in progress when Lord Kitchener inaugurated the college in February 1902, a year ahead of the completion of the construction .